

Amendments To The Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A core wire for a guide wire comprising a body portion having a high rigidity and a tip end portion having a rigidity lower than the rigidity of the body portion, wherein at least part of said core wire is made of a copper-based alloy comprising 3-10 weight % of Al and 5-20 weight % of Mn, the balance being substantially Cu and inevitable impurities,

wherein said copper-based alloy wire is formed by hot working and cold working, maintained at a temperature of at least 500°C and then rapidly quenched, and further subjected to an aging treatment comprising heating the high-rigidity body portion at a temperature of 250°-350°C, heating the tip end portion at a temperature of less than 250°, and an intermediate portion between said body portion and said tip end portion at a temperature continuously or stepwise [decreasing] changing from the heating temperature of said body portion to the heating temperature of said tip end portion, and wherein said copper-based alloy wire comprises a high-rigidity body portion, a low-rigidity tip end portion,

and an intermediate portion between said high-rigidity body portion and said low-rigidity tip end portion, said intermediate portion having rigidity continuously or stepwise [decreasing] changing from said high-rigidity body portion to said low-rigidity tip end portion.

Claims 2-4 (Canceled)

5. (Original) A guide wire comprising the core wire according to claim 1.

6. (Original) The guide wire according to claim 5 wherein said core wire is coated with a coating selected from the group consisting of Au, Pt, Ti, Pd, and TiN, and optionally with a resin.

7. (Currently Amended) A catheter at least partially comprising a metal pipe, said metal pipe being made in at least a tip end portion thereof of a copper-based alloy comprising 3-10 weight % Al and 5-20 weight % of Mn, the balance being substantially Cu and inevitable impurities, wherein said metal pipe is formed by hot working and cold working, maintained at a temperature of at least 500°C and rapidly quenched, and then subjected to an aging treatment at a temperature distribution that decreases continuously or stepwise in a direction from a base end to a tip end of the

catheter, wherein the highest temperature is 250°-350°C and the lowest temperature is lower than 250° in said temperature distribution, and wherein said catheter is relatively rigid in a body portion and has low rigidity in a tip end portion, and said metal pip has a bending modulus which decreases continuously or stepwise in a direction from a base end to a tip end of the catheter.

Claims 8-9 (Canceled)

10. (Original) The catheter according to claim 7 wherein said metal pipe has an outer diameter which is at least partially decreasing continuously or stepwise in a direction from a base end to a tip end of said catheter.

11. (Original) The catheter according to claim 7 wherein said metal pipe is coated with a coating selected from the group consisting of Au, Pt, Ti, Pd, and TiN and optionally a resin.

12. (Currently Amended) A catheter containing a reinforcing metal member in at least part of a catheter tube, said reinforcing metal member being made of a copper-based alloy comprising 3-10 weight % of Al and 5-20 weight % of Mn, the balance being substantially Cu and inevitable impurities wherein said reinforcing metal member is formed by hot working

and cold working, maintained at a temperature of at least 500°C
and rapidly quenched, and then subjected to an aging treatment
at a temperature distribution that decreases continuously or
stepwise in a direction from a base end to a tip end of the
catheter, wherein the highest temperature is 250°-350°C and the
lowest temperature is lower than 250°C, and

wherein said reinforcing metal member has a bending
modulus which decreases continuously or stepwise in a
direction from the base end to a tip end of said catheter.

Claims 13-14 (Canceled)

15. (Original) The catheter according to claim 12 wherein said reinforcing metal member is at least one thin copper-based alloy wire extending along said catheter.

16. (Original) The catheter according to claim 12 wherein said reinforcing metal member is a braid of thin copper-based alloy wires.

17. (Original) The catheter according to claim 12 wherein said reinforcing metal member is a coil of a thin copper-based alloy wire.